

Fish and Wildlife Commission Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date: August 29, 2013

Agenda Item: 2013 Late Season Migratory Bird Regulations

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Approval of Final Rule

Time for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background

Late season migratory bird hunting regulations pertain to ducks, geese, swans, and coots. Montana participates in both the Central and Pacific flyways and adheres to federal frameworks established by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in cooperation with flyway councils. Frameworks are based on population status from winter surveys for geese and May population and habitat surveys for ducks. Duck seasons use an adaptive harvest approach with three specific regulation packages (restrictive, moderate, liberal). Habitat conditions and population numbers are favorable to the extent that liberal season frameworks are available for Montana to implement in 2013. A split season for Central Flyway geese was in effect last year. For 2013, FWP proposes a late season split in both flyways. The daily bag limit for white geese in the Pacific Flyway is proposed to increase from 10 to 20. Final federal frameworks allow a 2-bird daily bag limit for canvasbacks in both Flyways. A moderate season framework with an 86-day season and a daily bag limit of 3 has been adopted for scaup in the Pacific Flyway, with a full-season 3-scaup daily bag in the Central Flyway. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently approved a change to allow possession limits to be 3 times the daily bag limit for all species that currently have a 2X possession limit. FWP proposes changing possession limits accordingly.

Central Flyway

Youth Waterfowl Season: Sept. 21-22 (2 days – limits below apply)

Duck, Coot and Tundra Swan (500 permits only) Season: Sept. 28–Jan. 2 (97 days)

- o Ducks: Daily bag limit shall be 6 ducks or mergansers, possession limit 3 times daily limit. Daily bag limit shall not include more than 5 mallards no more than 2 of which may be hens, 3 scaup, 2 redheads, 2 hooded mergansers, 3 wood ducks, 2 pintails, and 2 canvasbacks.
- o Coots: 15 daily, possession limit 3 times the daily limit

Goose Season: Sept. 28 – Jan. 5 AND Jan. 10-14 (105 days); Closed Jan. 6-9.

- o Geese: Dark - 5 daily, possession limit 3 times the daily limit; White -20 daily, possession limit 3 times the daily limit

Falconry: Ducks and coots: Sept. 21 – Jan. 5; Geese: Sept. 28 – Jan. 5 AND Jan. 10-14 (105 days); Closed Jan. 6-9.

Pacific Flyway

Youth Waterfowl Season: Sept. 21-22 (2 days – limits below apply)

Ducks and coots (excluding scaup): Sept. 28 – Jan. 5 AND Jan. 10-14 (105 days); Closed Jan. 6-9; Scaup: Sept. 28-Dec. 22

- o Ducks: Daily bag limit shall be 7 ducks or mergansers, possession limit 3 times the daily limit. Daily bag limit shall not include more than 3 scaup, 2 hen mallards, 2 pintails, 2 redheads, and 2 canvasbacks.

Coots: 25 daily and in possession

Goose season: Sept. 28 – Jan. 5 AND Jan. 10-14 (105 days); Closed Jan. 6-9

- o Geese: Dark - 4 daily, possession limit 3 times the daily limit; White - 20 daily, possession limit 3 times the daily limit

Swan (500 permits only) Season: Oct. 12–Dec. 1

Falconry: Sept. 28 – Jan. 5 AND Jan. 10-14 (105 days); Closed Jan. 6-9

Public Involvement Process & Results

Public comment ends at 5 p.m. on Aug. 26. As of Aug. 16 FWP received 13 comments, which are attached.

Proposed Motion

I move the Commission adopt the 2013 late season migratory bird regulations as presented by FWP.